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of species of *Pythonomorpha*, among which are a *Liodon*, with a conic muzzle, and a new genus allied to *Clidastes*. Other species are referred to the true *Plesiosaurus*.—E. D. C.

A NEW MASTODON.—The Mastodon of the Santa Fé marls turns out to be distinct from the *M. Chapmanii* of the East, and the *M. Shepardii* of California, and is allied to the *M. longirostris* of Europe. It has been named *N. productus* Cope. The presence of the genera of Mammalia characteristic of the Pliocene formations of Nebraska and Colorado refers these beds to the same horizon. A report on the paleontology of the formation is just issued by the Chief of Engineers, Washington.—E. D. C.

ANTHROPOLOGY.

CREMATION AMONG NORTH AMERICAN INDIANS.¹—The object of the present note is merely to record the fact, that among the many different methods of paying the last tribute of respect to deceased members of the tribe, which are now practised by the native races of North America, cremation is not entirely omitted.

In December, 1850, while enjoying the hospitality of the detachment of the 2nd U. S. Infantry, which at that time established Fort Yuma, the military post at the junction of the Colorado and Gila Rivers in California, I availed myself of the kind offer of Mr. Jordan, one of the owners of the ferry near the post, to make with him an exploration of the river below the junction.

Starting in a small flat boat, which he generously sacrificed for the purpose, with a Yuma Indian, who had a feeble knowledge of Spanish, as guide and interpreter, we floated down with the current of the river, making, by the aid of a solar compass, a rough survey. On the afternoon of the third day we arrived at the lowest village of the Cocopa Indians, who are the next tribe south of the Yumas. Below that village we were told that the spring tides widely overflowed the banks of the river, and that if we went farther, the softness of the mud might seriously hinder our return.

The next day I learned from the guide that an old man had died in a village near the east bank of the river, and that the body was to be burned.

¹ Read at the Hartford Meeting Amer. Assoc. Adv. Sci.

Never having heard before that this custom existed in North America, we eagerly availed ourselves of the opportunity of seeing the interesting ceremony. Crossing the stream in our flat boat, we arrived, after a walk of a couple of miles over the river bottom and adjoining desert, at the late residence of the deceased.

A short distance from the collection of thatched huts which composed the village, a shallow trench had been dug in the desert, in which were laid logs of the mesquite (*Prosopis*, and *Strombocarpus*), hard and dense wood, which makes, as all western campaigners know, a very hot fire, with little flame, or smoke. After a short time the body was brought from the village, surrounded by the family and other inhabitants, and laid on the logs in the trench. The relatives, as is usual with Indians, had their faces disfigured with black paint, and the females as is the custom with other savages made very loud exclamations of grief, mingled with what might be supposed to be funeral songs. Some smaller faggots were then placed on top, a few of the personal effects of the dead man added, and fire applied. After a time, a dense mass of dark colored smoke arose, and the burning of the body, which was much emaciated, proceeded rapidly. I began to be rather tired of the spectacle, and was about to go away, when one of the Indians, in a few words of Spanish, told me to remain, that there was yet something to be seen.

An old man then advanced from the assemblage, with a long pointed stick in his hand. Going near to the burning body he removed the eyes holding them successively on the point of the stick, in the direction of the sun, with his face turned towards that luminary, repeating at the same time some words, which I understood from our guide was a prayer for the happiness of the soul of the deceased. After this more faggots were heaped on the fire which was kept up for perhaps three or four hours longer. I did not remain, as there was nothing more of interest, but I learned on inquiry, that after the fire was burnt out, it was the custom to collect the fragments of bone which remained, and put them in a terra cotta vase, which was kept under the care of the family.

The ceremony of taking out the eyes, and offering them to the Sun, seems to indicate a feeble remnant of the widely diffused Sun worship of former times, but when introduced, or whence derived, I could not learn. The subject appears to me an important

one, and to deserve attention from those who are so situated as to procure further information.

None of the Cocopas whom I met had sufficient knowledge of Spanish to enable me to communicate easily with them, so that I learned little of their history or habits, during the two days that I remained among them. I however wrote down their numerals and a few other words, which were sufficient to confirm the information I afterwards obtained.

On a subsequent journey along the Gila to Tucson and other towns, then belonging to the Mexican state of Sonora, I passed through the villages of the Coco-maricopas who, as is well known to all of my hearers, live in a semi-civilized condition, in close bonds of union with the Pimos, on the banks of the Gila.

I was led by the similarity of language, as well as by the resemblance in name, to suspect that this tribe was related to the Cocopas of the lower Colorado. On enquiring, I was told by one of the chiefs, Francisco Duk, that they still preserved a tradition of the former connection of the two tribes. Many years ago, in search of more extensive lands, the Cocopas had separated from them, and gone westward, settling on the banks of the Colorado, below the confluence of the Gila. Visits were occasionally made to their villages by their kinsmen from the Colorado, and in fact, I had met on my journey a small party of Cocopas returning from the Maricopa villages.

The Maricopas are now completely identified in interests and habits with the Pimos, and if they practised cremation when they first entered the Gila valley, the usage has long since become obsolete.

Commercial intercourse between the Indians of these interior valleys and those of the Californian Gulf must have also taken place centuries ago, when a higher form of semi-civilization existed along the Gila. For not many days afterwards while examining the famous Casas Grandes or Casas Blancas, as they are more usually called, I found shells of the genera *Oliva* and *Conus*, which had been brought from the Gulf. Small ornaments of turquoise, similar to the variety found near Santa Fé, New Mexico, occasionally occur and are greatly prized by the Indians.